



Safe Bamboo Swords

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TOOLS:

- [Knife \(1\)](#)
to trim foam
- [Saw \(1\)](#)
to cut bamboo
- [Tape \(1\)](#)



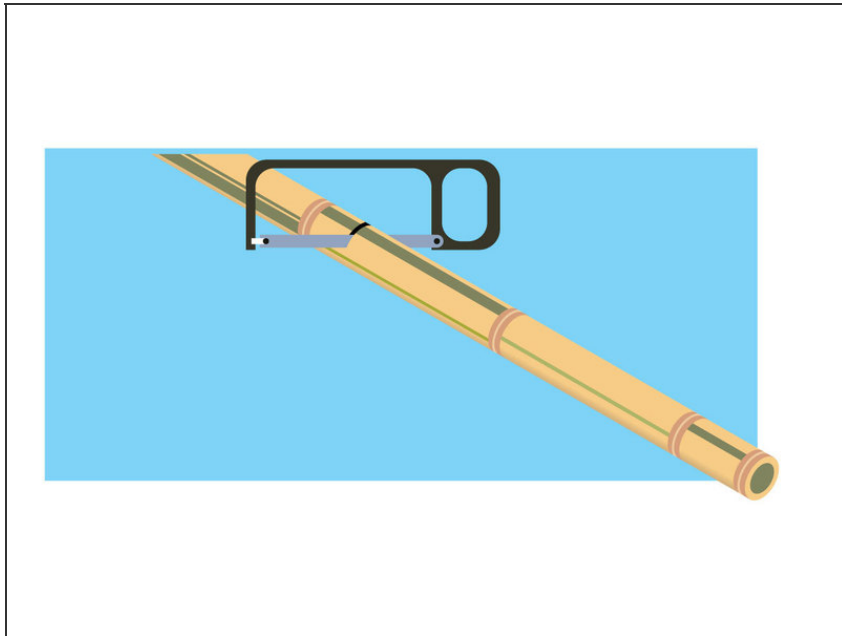
PARTS:

- [Pole \(1\)](#)
about 1" in diameter by 6' long
- [Foam \(1\)](#)
The kind with a slit along one side is best.

SUMMARY

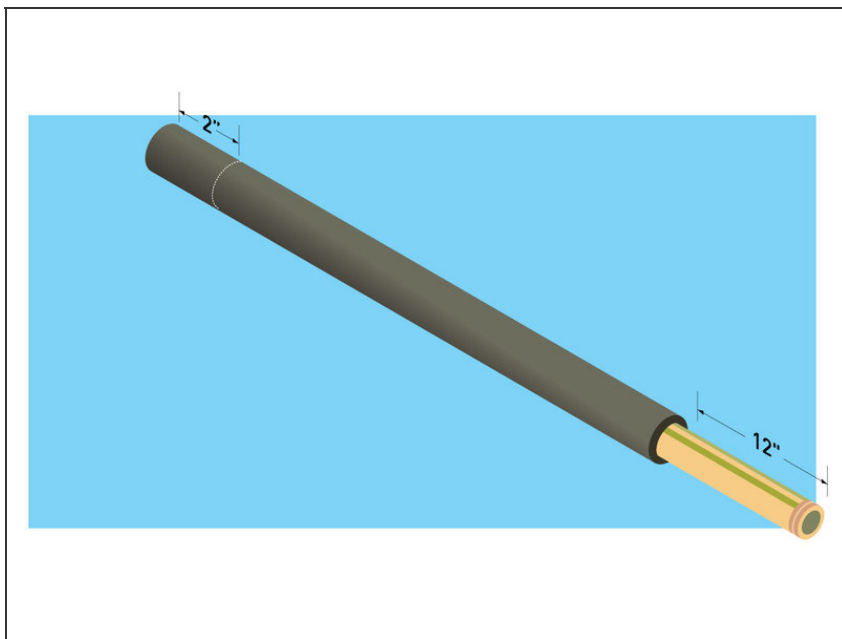
At an outdoor festival, my sons and I saw a group of teens play-fighting with padded swords. That looked like a lot of fun, so we tried making our own. It was remarkably easy and inexpensive — each sword costs about \$4.

Step 1 — Cut the bamboo (if desired).



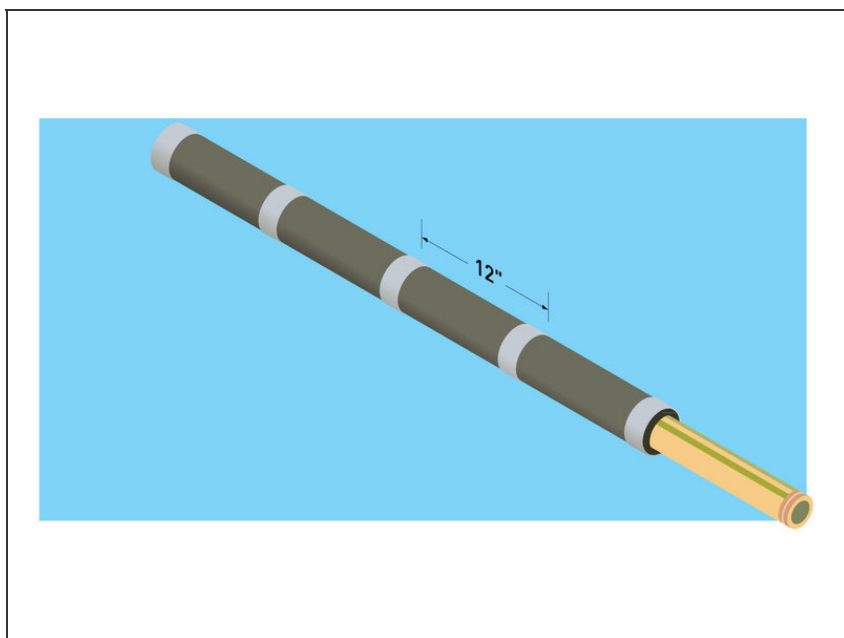
- Six-foot swords are great, but we also made two 3-footers.

Step 2 — Wrap it in foam.



- Squeeze the foam around the pole, leaving about 12" uncovered for the handle. Allow the foam to extend 1"-2" beyond the other end of the pole so the tip is padded.

Step 3 — Add duct tape for strength.



- The foam we chose has adhesive along the slit, but a few wraps of duct tape every foot or so will ensure that it doesn't split open. Some people wrap the whole thing in duct tape. Covering the handle with duct tape is also an option.

Step 4 — Use it.



- We battle using Monty Python's "Black Knight" rules: a chop to your opponent's arm or leg disables it; keep fighting until one of you has no limbs left. In the photo, Sir Christopher has lost both legs and King Toma has lost an arm.
- It's great, silly fun to fight while hopping on one leg or gripping the sword between your knees because you've lost both arms. Plus, the low mass of the poles and the thick padding make sparring fairly safe.

This project first appeared in [MAKE Volume 21](#).

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